

# A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY



## THE ENGINE SHED'S APPROACH IS VERY PRACTICAL BUT HAS A STRONG UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF RUDOLF STEINER. MARIAN EXPLAINS.

### Our Philosophy

“What we're doing here is very visible and practical. We attract a lot of people into the building and they see the trainees developing in front of their eyes and feel they are contributing towards that. The café customers definitely feel that they are part of the young people's welfare and always ask after them when they've gone.

The Steiner philosophy underlies all our work at the Engine Shed. It's a philosophy that sees each of us as unique, with an inner core that can never be destroyed. You could take someone who is quite disabled, or even slightly disabled, and people have never got to that inner core; they'll just be reacting to what they see on the outside. They never see the person, their needs and wishes and aspirations. This is a basic human need – just to give someone a space to shine really.

There's also a basic need for purpose in people's lives; that's what comes across so strongly in here – the fact that there is a real need for achievement and contribution and purpose. At the age group of our young people, part of their personal development is about how you are going to grow up and contribute. Work is one of the normal things that people do and is about how you become an adult. We see people come back to us at 23 or 24 and they are grown up; the boy or girl is gone and they've become adults. The problem with our lot is they can be seen as eternal children almost, but if you get them at the right age and point in their lives you can help them make that transition into adulthood.

Part of the Steiner philosophy is also about bringing rhythm and balance into our lives and one way to do that is to celebrate the festivals, and to be in tune with the seasons of the year. Mid-summer is St John's time and the trainees know there's going to be an outside activity in the form of us all going out for a walk together. We'll talk to trainees a wee bit about why we're doing it.

Then there is Christmas. The trainees all like Christmas anyway and we do a bit about why we all come together at the end of the year – why it is a special time. We ask them to say what it means to them – a lot of them will say it's about being with your family and sharing. We talk about how we work together and then they sing Christmas carols – which they love doing.

That's when we light the candles, each of us passing the candle light to one another: it symbolises the fact it's a dark time of year but that the light is coming back. For the trainees it's really a social thing, but it creates a quiet, reflective mood in contrast to the busyness of the time of year. It's a chance to share the final moments of our working year quietly together.”